

## [fw-wiz] Re: Flawed Surveys [was: VPN endpoints]

*Source:* <http://www.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/Firewall-Wizards/2004-09/0019.html>

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**From:** Paul D. Robertson (*paul\_at\_compuwar.net*)

**Date:** 09/01/04

To: "Marcus J. Ranum" <mjr@ranum.com>

Date: Wed, 1 Sep 2004 16:16:38 -0400 (EDT)

On Wed, 1 Sep 2004, Marcus J. Ranum wrote:

> *Paul D. Robertson wrote:*

> > *I've often used the results of non-randomized, non-blinded surveys to*

> > *approximate my risk. It's often worked well. Just because it can go*

> > *wrong doesn't mean it has to.*

>

> *People used the theory that Earth was in the center of the solar*

> *system for thousands of years. It often worked well. Just because*

> *it was wrong didn't really matter a whole lot, either, until they*

> *started trying to use that theory for actual problem-solving*

> *instead of just painting cool stuff on temple walls.*

Ah, let's take this a step further.

When people thought the earth was flat, they drew maps based upon that thought. What I'm saying is that those maps were *\_useful\_* for finding one's way around— even though they weren't as accurate or correct as they could have been— and they were less accurate for long trips than they were for short ones.

We're in a space where getting good incident data say from the financial sector just isn't going to happen. Rather than throwing up my hands and waiting for good data, I'll deal with what I can get, and find it useful.

> *When "doing it right" is just a small amount harder than "doing*  
> *it wrong" the excuse "I like doing it wrong" is really, really weak.*

Absolutely! But when it comes between doing it not at all, or doing it poorly, doing it poorly can be useful.

I'm not saying "Let's base everything we can on surveys!" I'm saying that survey data can be useful, and you can improve the usefulness of that data by throwing out the obviously bad data (outliers) and by checking against the data you do have.

Paul

Firewall-Wizards: [fw-wiz] Re: Flawed Surveys [was: VPN endpoints]

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Paul D. Robertson "My statements in this message are personal opinions  
paul@compuwar.net which may have no basis whatsoever in fact."  
probertson@trusecure.com Director of Risk Assessment TruSecure Corporation

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